

ourselves of greater worth," to use the phrase of the Puritan Milton, "than to place the precious jewels of our godlike faculties upon the low brow of sensual death." Temptation will not come to you, does not to nobler souls in that way,—not as Cardinal Newman describes it in his "Dream of Gerontius."

"Some bodily form of ill
Floats on the wind with many a loathsome curse,
Tainting the hallowed air, and laughs and flaps
Its hideous wings."

Rather as an angel of light does Satan come, and as such, is most to be feared.

The greater number of the failures of life come not so much thru the choice of wrong ideals, as the wrong means of their attainment; seeking the good not in God's way but thru our own.

We recall how Jesus was standing on the lofty pinnacle of the temple where a priest watched every morning the sun's first beams kiss the gray Judean hills as a signal for the early sacrifice. "Cast yourself down from the dizzy height," whispered the tempter; "borne on angel hands into the courts of your Father's house below, you will prove your trust in God and be hailed by the astonished multitude as their Messiah and King. By one grand Master stroke you can seize your kingdom and avoid the way of the cross."

This is the essence of the temptation with which every man is assailed. Seek the greater good without the expense of present loss and pain. Thus it came we may be sure to Moses. "What is the use of leaving the palace, of identifying yourselves with slaves?" So the evil one would ask, "Remain a prince and you can use your influence and wealth to help your brethren. Lead Egyptian armies to victory and some day you may grasp the power and emancipate the nation." The specious temptation failed; Moses refused.

So temptation will come to you. Every selfish choice of life; every aspiration which goes not out to our fellow-men; every attempt to attain even a laudable end save by a straight forward course of action; wealth, applause, honors, office, that which men call success, gained by torturous policies, by means which conscience and God's word do not approve. However the means may accord with the world's methods, is to yield to the temptation;—is to fail to make the great renunciation, is to make life a failure and our names dishonorable.

Moses endured. We need, my young friends, to burn that word into our very souls, for it is the lack of this power of passive endurance which causes so many of the failures of the high resolves and bright hopes of youth. It is so easy to give up the agony of conflict with the sin of self and the necessary protest against the sin of the world. It is so easy to drift with popular opinion. The spirit of the age carries multitudes from their moorings as helpless to resist as driftwood is to float against the tide. We need men of the Moses stamp who do not count

the cost; men "whom the spoils of office cannot buy;" men who do not take council with expediency or fashion, nor ask the opinion of the Egyptian, but who inquire of conscience and of God.

Our text tells that this grace of endurance came to the great law-giver as thru "seeing him who is invisible."

Every life is moulded by its vision,—in other words, by its ideal. It may be only the dream of a fleeting passion, begotten by "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life," a dream of a mess of pottage, as it were, or it may be a Bethel vision of the stairway which slopes thru the darkness up to God. Afterwhile that red, red pottage will become bitter to the taste, therefore we seek a place of repentance with tears; the dream will turn into a hideous nightmare of remorse and shame and the spectral brood of sin. You have seen perhaps some home flaunting of vice that looked quite resplendent in the gas-light, but the next morning under the searching light of the sun, it seemed poor and tawdry. The gilt was only veneer; the silver was plated and the cut glass multiplied by the illusion of mirrors. So in the blazing light of that hour when the soul's supreme need is revealed much of what the heart coveted most will seem so worthless as to awaken our contempt and hatred. Not so the Bethel dream; it is never in vain. The vision may fade away into the light of common day, the gleam of angel-wings be lost in the cold gray dawn of the morning, but the dreamer's eyes will never lose the reflection of the far-off glory of "that light which never was on sea or land." "Some fragment from his dream of human life" will endure and by this sign will he conquer.

We are too much accustomed to read these stories, such as we have been considering, as belonging to a far-off past, and so having no meaning to ourselves. But God is as real now, and his message has as quick and vital significance to us as to the people of those vague ages of which the Old Testament is an interpretation. The Almighty is not to be relegated to the skies, nor Jesus Christ to far-off Bethlehem. Heaven lies about us—not only in our infancy, but in manhood and in those years when we are children again.

"Earth, crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes."

We must inquire, must seek after the infinite; we must take off our shoes in holy reverence, if this "dull, cold spot which men call earth" is to be made sacred, and to hear the divine message. So do and life will be surrounded by God.

"Every hope which rises and grows lived
In the world's heart, by ordered impulse streams
From the great heart of God,
And gives us that vision which redeems youth,
manhood and age."

And the further vision comes from obey-

ing. By the endeavoring we grow into the Christ-likeness and at last attain to see the vision of God. Moses stood by the bush and heard God speak and obeyed. He stood again on the same mount and saw the glory of Jehovah pass by.

I once stood in a deep mountain valley, shut in by the rocky walls amidst the shadows looking to the far mountain top bathed in the light, and wished but thought it impossible to reach the encrimsoned height. But as I climbed the sunbeams came down to meet me; the landscape widened, the vision grew lovelier,—the panorama more magnificent, until at last I reached the everlasting snow. So in the moral and spiritual world. He who listens to the voice of conscience,

"—Ever following her commands,
On with toil of heart and knees and hands
Thru the long gorge to the far light, has won
His path upward and prevailed
Shall find the topping crags of Duty scaled
Are close upon the shining table lands
To which our God himself is morn and sun."

And if there was no higher end in life than to gain an imperishable name, still "the path of duty is the way to glory," as the same poet has told us.

Let us suppose that Moses had failed to make the refusal,—been content to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,—what then? A few years of feasting, of selfish ease, of a stinging conscience and then to die and be forgotten—that is all. His name, perchance, would have been cut in indecipherable hieroglyphics upon some rock-hewn sarcophagus, over which puzzled antiquarians might dispute; his mummied body been carted about as a side show to some peripatetic museum, "for mummy is merchandise; Mizraim cures wounds, and Pharaoh is sold for balsams." But now his name and fame are eternal. Every age has felt his influence. None born of woman save only he whom we acknowledge as brother man and worship as God has left such an impress on the world's history. Conscience, duty, right are not things visible but they are a force in the world. Duty, says an eloquent Frenchman, "will always be grand, and the humblest ministry sacred when instead of a merely human obligation it be recognized as divine investiture, as a priesthood which cometh from above."

The last scene in the life of this servant of God has its special lessons for you who are young in years. The world's distant prospect lies before you with an enamel of glory. "Old men see visions," but young men, before their hopefulness has been chilled by manifold disappointments, "dream dreams." It is right they should. The boy, the girl who has never planned above the opportunity of accomplishment is to be pitied. Do not be surprised, my young friends, at frequent disappointments,—surprised when your best purposes are broken off in the mysterious providences of life. You may be forbidden, Moses like, to "pass over this Jordan." Do not imagine, however, if